* 539 • 84

/125 cont./

And then Yúpuri Baúro and all his people learned for the first time that in order to have children the woman first has to be pregnant. There were only a pair of women among all of them. One was named Nijĩ Majsó and the other was named Meropagnijĩ Majsó. And the /126/ two of them went out by the back door of Diawĩ and went to bathe at the port. Bejpó saw then that the women had gone to bathe at the port, and Bejpó took out two small coins, one called Pajsĩ and the other Erofiã. And Bejpó took out these two coins to dry in the sun. And the two women again came to Diawĩ. And when they were returning to Diawĩ, they caught sight of the coins and they kept looking at them. And the two women said: "What would these two little things be?" And the two women fell in love with these two little things. And these two little things seemed like babies and cried. But only one of the women saw the two coins as babies, while the other woman was only able to see two little coins. And this is where roving about came from, and because of this, of every two women, one will come out sedate and the other will come out a prostitute. Meropagnijĩ Majsó, who was the younger sister, saw the two little things as babies, while Nijĩ Majsó, who was the older sister, saw the two little things as little coins. Then Meropagnijĩ Majsó said to Nijĩ Majsó: "Do not pick them up." Then Nijĩ Majsó said: "I am picking them up." And Nijĩ Majsó picked them up, smelled them, and the two little things smelled like coins. And as soon as she smelled them, Nijĩ Majsó ate them. And it did not take even a minute for her to become pregnant. Then Meropagnijĩ Majsó said: "Don't you see? I told you not to pick them up." And Meropagnijĩ Majsó saw that Nijĩ Majsó was pregnant. And the stomach of Nijĩ Majsó was swelling up. But these two women had the appearance of men and did not have breasts or opening. Then Meropagnijĩ Majsó said: "What shall we do?" Then both called to Yepá Huáke. And Yepá Huáke came to where they were. Then they said to Yepá Huáke: "Now what are we going to do?" Then Yepá Huáke said: "It is all right. Now the child must be born. You are going to have husbands. You will die" (40).

40. Will not be immortal.

*539 •84 /126 cont./
Then Niji Majsó went into the brush in order to give birth and Yepá Huáke gave Meropagniji Majsó a fork for using a cigar, but without a cigar, and a small knife. Then Yepá Huáke said to Meropagniji Majsó: "Take this fork and put it on top of a thin stick and have Niji Majsó lie on her side on top of this stick. And you lie down on your back on top of the stick." Then Yepá Huáke gave Meropagniji Majsó a small piece of furniture and a small balaya (41),

41. A basket.

which is called Sióa in Tukano. And Yepá Huáke said: "When you are lying down well on your back, start to measure with /127/ the width of the fork between the legs of Niji Majsó, and as soon as you put this little fork between her legs, Kúmu will blow for Niji Majsó. And cut the skin of Niji Majsó the whole width of the little fork and the child will be born." And Yepá Huáke said. "And that cut that you made on Niji Majsó, in the way that Niji Majsó has it, all women will also have. All women will have children until the end of the world. And the men will not be able to see that cut." Then Yepá Huáke said to Meropagniji Majsó: "As soon as that child is born, put it on top of the balaya and Niji Majsó will remain unconscious. And Niji Majsó will suffer so that the child may be taken, and this is why the child will respect his mama. And if the child did not respect his mama, who is Niji Majsó, then send him away to go to another place." And from there came the respect for one's mother. Then Yepá Huáke said to Meropagniji Majsó: "Bring that child to Diawi and leave him in the middle of Diawi on top of the balaya, and then I shall come to cut the umbilical cord of the child. I shall remove that umbilical cord, and then I shall bury that umbilical cord in the ground of Diawi, and there is the boundary of the land of you, the Tukano." As soon as Meropagniji Majsó brought the child to Diawi and Yepá Huáke cut and buried the umbilical cord, *539 Yepá Huáke made the boat of the gũío enter Diawi. And after the boat of the gũío had entered Diawi, Yepá Huaáke called the brother of Yúpuri Baúro, who is named Siópuri Uejké (42).

42. Colombian.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
SQ19 Tucano SQ19
CUBEO

A woman is active until the moment her labor pains begin. I have seen a pregnant woman leave for her manioc garden behaving as though it were an ordinary gardening day, and return later in the afternoon with a newborn baby. A man is forbidden to be present at the birth of his wife's first child. At her first childbirth a woman is attended by her mother-in-law. In subsequent parturitions she may be unaccompanied, but if she does not feel too strong she invites her mother-in-law or any other woman to accompany her. A woman about to give birth must alert her husband so that he will not leave the house or do anything strenuous that would interfere magically with the delivery and the safety of the infant. The Cubeo give no particular reason for having the child born in the manioc garden. They reveal only a general apprehension that if the child were born in the maloca something would go wrong. Not all children are born in the manioc garden. In bad weather, or at night, a woman settles for the rear plaza as a birth site. Occasionally outside birth is too dangerous and the woman then retires behind screens at the rear of the maloca. The point the Indians insist on is that a child must not be born within the domain of the men. The infant must be brought from the woman's domain and installed by proper ceremony in the male domain. There is a parallel here, I believe, in the bringing in of a wife from her community to that of her husband.

Difficulties in childbirth are attributed to demonic agencies and require the assistance of a medicine man. Human sorcery does not affect childbirth. The common supernatural enemy of the woman in labor is the boa constrictor. When a woman dies in childbirth it may be explained that she had copulated in her garden at one time with a boa. The boa then comes to fetch his child. If he sees that it is a human child after all, he is angered and carries away the mother.

Childbirth (*pwãntadjú*: making a person) is a dangerous period. First the mother and then the infant are subject to supernatural perils that must be warded off. Little can be done, the Cubeo believe, to protect a woman in childbirth. The magical safeguards for the child, however, are elaborate. Primary responsibility for the safety of the newborn infant rests with the parents – with the father, in particular, since it is he who has "made" the child. Some of the precautions begin well before birth. Extra coitus, we have observed, adds to the number of children. Twins, for example, are regarded as a misfortune. Some said both twins are put to death and others said only one, the last to emerge being the one to be killed. Twins may also be born if the father, during his wife's pregnancy, has eaten plantains. If at this time he should greedily break off a bit of manioc